

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon
UN Headquarters
First Avenue at 46th Street
New York, NY 10017

February 29, 2008

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

We are writing to you today out of concern regarding the crisis in northern Uganda and to appeal for increased United Nations support of current efforts to achieve implemented and lasting peace in the region.

As you know, the peace negotiations being held in Juba, southern Sudan between the Government of Uganda and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) are widely acknowledged as the best chance to end the 20 year-old rebel insurgency in northern Uganda. The ongoing talks, which began in 2006, have already led to dramatic improvements in regional security and new hope among war-affected communities in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. The signing of a permanent ceasefire last weekend is a momentous step for northern Uganda and the region. Approximately 300,000 of the 1.8 million people displaced by the crisis have already been able to return home and are beginning the process of recovery and economic development. The toughest challenges remain, however: implementing the \$600 million Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) and devising accountability and political representation arrangements that suit both parties.

We welcome the steps taken by our own government thus far to help ensure the success of the Juba peace talks and resulting agreements. In particular, we applaud the recent decision of the United States – along with the European Union – to take on an official observer's status. Both the Ugandan and LRA delegations were pleased, and chief mediator, Dr. Riek Machar, heralded this step “as an indication that the whole world wants Uganda to be peaceful.”

Unfortunately, the negotiations continue to be threatened by a lack of resources, trust, and accountability. The U.S. and the E.U. are limited in the influence and authority they can wield, as well as the type and amount of assistance they can provide. African leadership of the process, which has been laudable in its efforts to keep the warring parties committed to peacefully resolving the conflict, would be significantly enhanced by more formal and consistent support from the United Nations. The cross-border nature and repercussions of this conflict makes it a legitimate threat to regional and international security, the explicit realm of UN authority.

The UN's envoy, Joachim Chissano, is well respected by all parties in Juba, but his limited presence and mandate severely limit his ability to contribute to the process, products, or execution of these historic talks. Empowering Chissano to engage as a formal observer and as a guarantor of any final agreement reached by the parties would help build confidence and add much-needed leverage and accountability to the peace process.

Similarly, the United Nations has a great deal to offer in the way of humanitarian and technical assistance towards the timely and complete implementation of the PRDP. This reconstruction program is the first step towards addressing the root causes of the conflict in northern Uganda, where citizens have been neglected and persecuted for decades. In the first year of this four-year plan, it will be essential to demonstrate an observable peace dividend and national and international commitment to foster the socio-economic development the people of this conflict-torn region have been promised.

To improve the prospect of reaching a consolidated peace agreement and achieving stability and development throughout Uganda and the region, we urge you to press for more diplomatic and material support from the United Nations in Juba and northern Uganda. We specifically call for official UN observer status at the peace talks and increased assistance for implementation of the PRDP. These public gestures would not only build confidence in the negotiations process by showing the international community's committed investment in peace, but would also advance long-term humanitarian and security interests in this troubled region.

We look forward to hearing how you plan to enhance United Nations assistance efforts in this region and thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Russell Feingold
Member of Congress

Sam Brownback
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Pete Fortney Stark
Member of Congress



David Wu
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



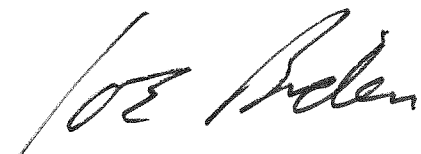
John Lewis
Member of Congress



Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



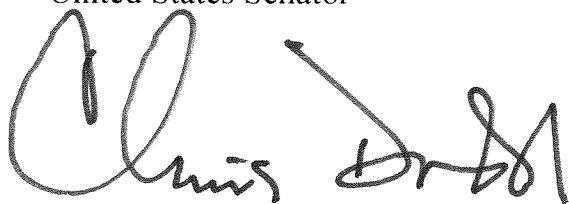
Frank Wolf
Member of Congress



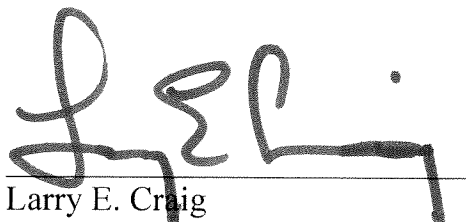
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator



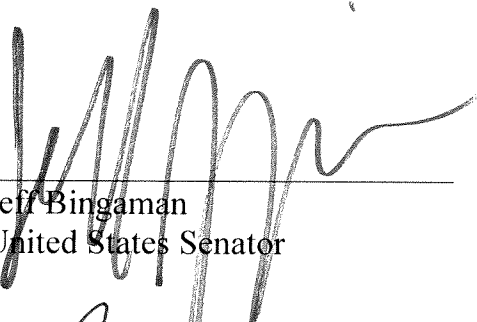
Norm Coleman
United States Senator



Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator



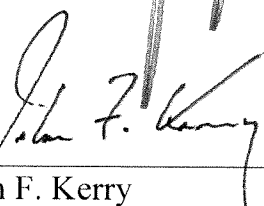
Larry E. Craig
United States Senator



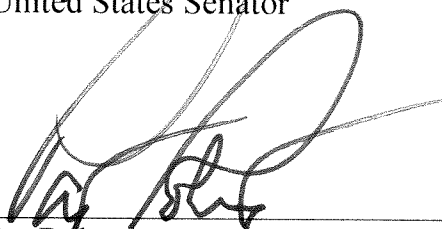
Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator



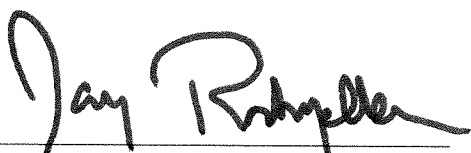
Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator



John F. Kerry
United States Senator



Pat Roberts
United States Senator



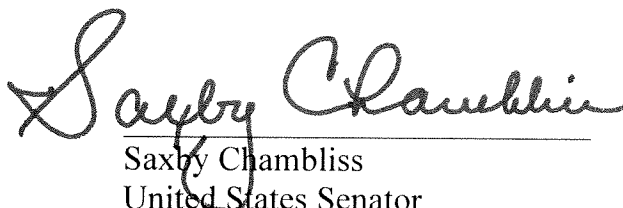
John D. Rockefeller, IV
United States Senator



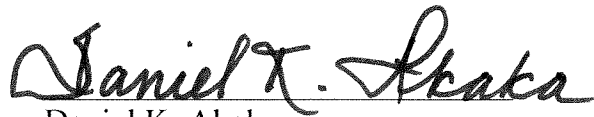
George V. Voinovich
United States Senator



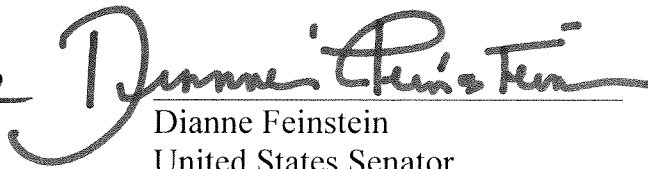
Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Saxby Chambliss
United States Senator



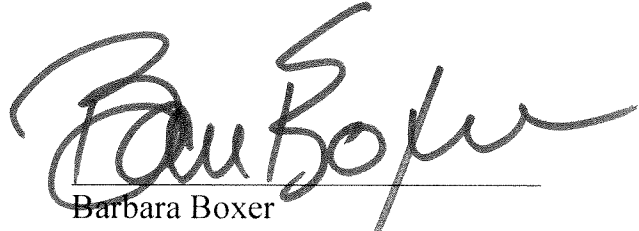
Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



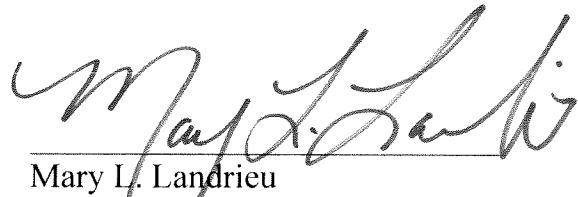
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



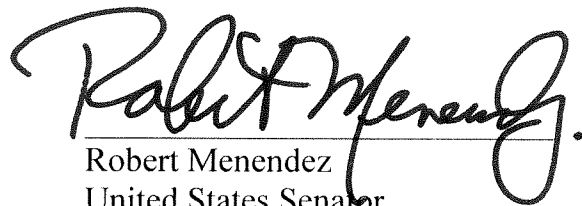
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



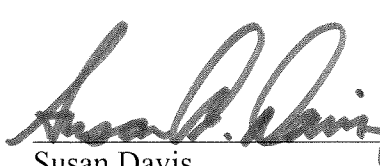
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

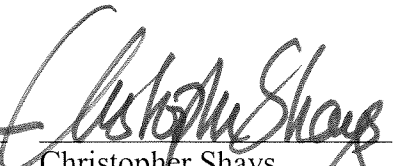


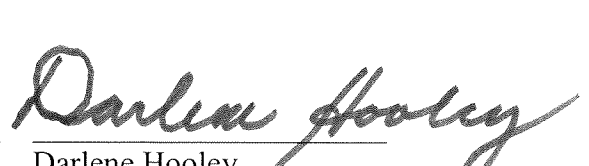
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Susan Davis
Member of Congress

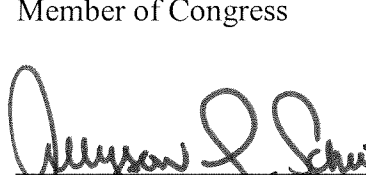

Christopher Shays
Member of Congress

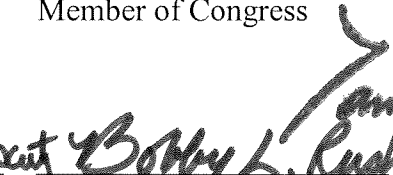

Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress

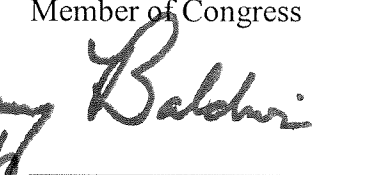

Joe Sestak
Member of Congress


Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress


Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress


Allyson J. Schwartz
Member of Congress


Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress


Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

cc: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad